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The attached is from today's Star.

Colby: Dumping Of Diem by JFK Worst War Error

NEW YORK (UPI) — President John F. Kennedy committed the worst mistake of the Vietnam war, according to former CIA Director William Colby.

"The Hue riot (by Buddhists in May 1963) led to what I consider the worst mistake of the Vietnam war: the American-sponsored overthrow of (South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh) Diem," Colby wrote in his memoirs, "Honorable Men," being published this month by Simon & Schuster.

Diem was overthrown and killed by a coup by South Vietnamese generals. Said Colby: "The story of the coup is well known and need not be repeated here. It is plain, however, that the American decision with respect to it was made by the White House, not by the CIA." Kennedy was president then.

Colby, for years a CIA leader in Vietnam before rising to the directorship, said Diem and not the generals who killed him had the political ability to defeat the Communists. Colby said the White House did not appreciate that.

COLBY SAID THE American-supported South Vietnamese, even after Diem's overthrow, won on the battlefield. He said the Communists took a beating in their famous Tet offensive of 1968 but domestic U.S. anti-war fervor turned it into a Hanoi triumph among the American people.

At the end, three years ago, when Saigon crumbled, Colby said it was the fault of the U.S. Congress.

"The tactical errors of the final days, of course, contributed to Saigon's fall, but I believe the root cause to have been the congressional signal of sharply reduced aid, with its inevitable effect in loss of morale and panic," he wrote.

Then-President Gerald R. Ford has asked Congress to provide money to keep Saigon's forces fighting. But Congress refused and the collapse ensued.

Colby's book says much else that may trouble believers in the anti-war movement. He also speaks uncomfortable words of Republicans, Democrats, the press and other sometime foes of the CIA.

Colby, before being fired by Ford, who wanted a fresh face at the head of the CIA following Vietnam and Watergate, suffered almost daily from attacks during the early 1970s' painting of the intelligence agency as something of a masked villain of U.S. life.

Some of Colby's looks back:

- Sen. Frank Church's investigation committee was accurate in saying it found no evidence that the CIA actually overthrew the late Chilean President Salvador Allende. But, said Colby, the CIA in 1970 "sought a military coup (against Allende), at the direct order of President Nixon." Nothing came of Nixon's order, however.

- Colby, without reservation, lists Otto John, the head of the West German CIA who defected to the Russians and then came back, as a Soviet agent, although John and his friends insists he was always pro-West. • Colby also said he noted the Church committee in the Senate dealt gingerly with the late Kennedy's CIA dealings. Discussing the abortive pre-Colby CIA attempt to use the Mafia against Castro, Colby mentioned a woman who claimed intimate links to Kennedy.

"An amusing sidelight to this incident (the Church investigation) was the committee's own effort to protect the identity of a 'close friend of President Kennedy' who was also a 'close friend' of the Mafia figures involved — Judith Campbell Exner."